

**CONGRESSWOMAN CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS' STATEMENT
EDUCATION AND LABOR COMMITTEE
MARK UP OF H.R. 3200
JULY 16, 2009**

Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My amendment simply recognizes the sovereignty of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments by excluding them from the federal “pay or play” mandate on employers.

Mr. Chairman, federal law has long-recognized the sovereign nature of Indian tribal governments—they are currently afforded special treatment under federal pension, labor and a host of other federal laws.

Indian tribal governments may be among the hardest hit by the bill’s “pay or play” mandate. As sovereign entities, they should have the right to determine the benefits they provide to their employees—free from federal government bureaucracy and red tape.

By putting additional burdens on American Indians and Alaska Native tribal governments—a group we have already committed to provide the highest possible health care. I believe this is an example of the lack of thoughtfulness of how the employer mandate will play out in the long run.

All Americans should have the ability to choose the best health care plan and options to meet their individual and family needs, but this bill, in fact, does the opposite.

In June 2009, the Lewin Group found that 114 million Americans would be forced out of their private health coverage under this plan, including 106 million with employer coverage.

Individuals covered by Indian tribal government plans would surely lose their current health care coverage unless they are specifically protected. I hope my colleagues will join me in keeping our commitment to our Indian tribes.

I yield back the balance of my time.